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ABSTRACT

These two lectures discuss children's rights and the role that government can play in helping to alleviate some of the difficulties faced by children in developing nations, focusing on the situation in Costa Rica, specifically, and Latin America, in general. The first lecture examines some of the economic and social problems in Costa Rica, their impact on children, and the Costa Rican government's decision to create the office of Ombudsman for Children. This official will be charged with instituting studies on the needs of children, examining and recommending for revision laws and legal procedures related to children, and promoting the rights of children. The second lecture addresses some of the common difficulties faced by Latin American countries, the lack of educational communication and exchange among Latin American nations, and the development of the Latin America and Caribbean Child and Family Network to improve communication and exchange on family and educational issues. Included are two speeches by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez made in Oslo, Norway, in 1987 upon his reception of the Nobel Peace Prize. (MDM)

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RECHTEN VAN KINDEREN

Cahier 7

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1. Lecture on the Ombudsman for Children in Costa Rica.
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Gent, 1989

INHOUD

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Bijlage: Peace has no finishing line.
Only Peace can write the new history.

Addresses in Oslo, Norway, by **Oscar Arias Sánchez**, December 10th and 11th 1987, on occasion of receive the Nobel Prize of Peace 1987. p. 41

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LECTURE ON THE OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN IN COSTA RICA

Paper presented to the Seminarie en Laboratorium voor Jeugdwelzijn en Volwassenenvorming, University of Ghent, January 1989, by Rolando Quiros.

Allow me, first of all, to express to the authorities of the State University of Ghent, and in particular to Professor Dr. Verhellen, my deepest appreciation for the honour of being with you tonight.

Just before leaving my country for this trip, I talked with our President, Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez and he requested me to express to you that Costa Rica considers this invitation a vote of confidence for its efforts in favour of children and that - certainly - it should be the beginning of a lasting and mutually satisfactory relationship for the benefit of our most cherised asset : our children, the inheritors of 21st. Century.

I come from a small country. Our total population is not yet 3 million inhabitants. Our total area is 59.000 sq. Kms.

I come from a young country : fully 43 % of our total population is less than 17 years old. Therefor, it should not be a surprise to see that such a large portion of our population should receive special attention and large shares of our budgetary resources.

I come from a country that decided, 40 years ago, to abolish its army, and to use the funds previously given to the army to strengthen its educational and health systems. The arms then available were exchanged for plows and the military establishments were converted into schools, museums and libraries. None of our children have ever seen, on our soil, an armed helicopter, or a tank or a cannon.

But because we are small, and because our economy is based on agricultural products subject to the rules of supply and demand, and to cartels and monopolies of the world markets, we have problems that have not been solved and challenges that face us and require our constant efforts and attention.

I will cite but a few of these problems :

- A foreign debt that has grown out of all proportions. Its service requires 50 % of our total income from our exports.

- Participation in a Central American Economic Integration Treaty that at present is all but extinct.

- Inflationary pressures that erode the real income of all sectors, but with more impact on those who have more needs.

- A public burocracy that, in some instances, takes for itself in salaries, benefits and pensions, more than 80 % of the total budget of some institutions.

- Great economic disparities among different regions within the country, due to lack of communication facilities, land tenure patterns and political strength.

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To this situation we must add, during the decade of the 80s, the consequences of armed conflicts in some of our neighbouring countries, specially Nicaragua, our nextdoor neighbour on the northern frontier.

As a result we have more than 36.000 Nicaraguans as refugees and probably between 100 and 120 thousand Central American undocumented citizens living in our country.
This means that 6 % of our total population is at present constituted by Central Americans affected by political and armed conflicts from outside our own country.

Costa Rica has been able, with sacrifices, that included even a threat to our sovereignity, if not to recover fully from the crisis of the early 80s, at least to stop the slide towards even more deteriorated conditions.

In 1973 our Gross National Product was growing at an average rate of 8 % per year. In 1985 it was 0.88 %. We are now back to an estimated 4 % growth for 1988.
In 1975, 27 % of our families were considered to be living below the poverty line, in 1982 this percentage rose to 48 % of the families.

Our unemployment rate had been about 5 %, but in 1983 it rose to 9 %, almost double its traditional rate.
To this acute economic crisis must be added - or perhaps as a result of the crisis - a dangerous increase in the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents and a general increase in delinquency rates. The mass

communication media, which brings into our homes violence and external consumer attitudes, has also contributed to this situation.

- As a result there has been a disproportionate growth of a sector of the population with conditions of vulnerability that place youth, children and women heads of households of the lowest sectors of society at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the judicial, cultural and economic systems.

For several years, therefore, we have "accumulated" old and new problems that - today - seem to be out of proportion with the possibilities of solution when the government has to decrease its resources destined to social aspects of development.

There is, today, a saturation of some of the government services in traditional areas such as the treatment of offenders, and the provision of subsidized food. And we also face new problems such as drug addiction, refugees and violence that have deteriorated the general standards of living and have probably created situations that have attempted against the rights of individuals, specially children.

As an answer to these problems the government has decided to make special efforts - instead of additional financial resources - to obtain greater efficiency through the coordination of institutional efforts and by strengthening the protection of children's rights.

In this last aspect, the Office of the First Lady of the Republic and the Ministry of Justice proposed the need to create a new legal figure : the Ombudsman for Children. This proposal - not without some problems as we shall see later - was approved by the President and became an Executive Decree on Children's Day, September 9 of 1987. In general terms, the Decree establishing the Ombudsman for Children follows the line of thought of Radda Barnen's Ombudsman in Sweden. It is to be a mediator for children as well as a voice on their behalf. We like to think that our Ombudsman is the concience of our children speaking to institutions - both from the government and from the private sector - and to individuals.

The justification for its creation was stated as follows :

- Children are the most precious resource of the country and deserve special attention and protection from the government, its institutions and all citizens.

- Children have a right to have their own instance to make known their needs as well as their aspirations and to demand and defend their rights.

- It is necessary to promote responsability among all individuals so that the welfare of children always receives privileged attention.

The first problem we faced when the proposed decree was submitted for opinion to the most important institutions dealing with the attention of

children came - surprisingly - from our National Children's Institute (Patronato Nacional de la Infancia) the oldest official institution, created by Constitutional Decree, that has as its objective "the special care of children".

It was their opinion that, being entrusted by the Constitution with the responsibility for the wellbeing and the protection of children, the Ombudsman for children should be a part of their institution. That to have him working outside their own sphere of influence would duplicate their responsibility. The problem was, of course, that - as we then supposed - most of the complaints related with infringement of children's rights have been, precisely, against this institution !

This raised another problem : where should the ombudsman be situated so that he would have enough authority but also the possibility of acting independently ?

We considered various alternatives that were possible :

- Completely independent, under the responsibility of a non governmental institution, such as the Swedish system.

- Directly under the Office of the President of the Republic.

- As part of a proposed law that will create the Ombudsman of the People that is presently under study of our National Assembly, or Congress.

In the first case, we do not have a powerful enough non governmental organization that could assume this responsibility.

The President's Office could be - one way or another - considered as subject to political influences.

As to the Office of the Ombudsman of the People, the new law is not scheduled for review by Congress in the near future, and it was not convenient to postpone the creation of the Ombudsman for Children.

The decision, then, was to place it under the Minister of Justice which, in a sense does not implement projects and therefore cannot be accused of acting for its own benefit or of covering affairs to protect certain institutions or individuals. But we also decided that - once the Ombudsman of the People has been established as an independent office of the Legislative Assembly, the Ombudsman for Children's Rights office will be transferred to this new office.
But, the important thing was to go ahead with the project and not wait until this new office was approved.
The Decree that established the Ombudsman for Children states that it is the Minister of Justice responsibility to appoint him, and that he is sworn in by the President.

As soon as the Decree was signed we met another form of opposition : some persons, mostly lawyers, expressed the opinion that this was something too sophisticated for a developing country. That the idea of the

Ombudsman for Children would not help in any way because there is not a sufficiently strong public opinion that would give the moral status and backing that an Ombudsman needs for its work to be successful. Also mentioned, was the fact that our country has its own judicial structure and that this provided enough possibilities to cover whatever legal needs there were for the protection of children. Needless to say that some of the persons - not all, however - that had proposed the creation of the Ombudsman of the People considered that we were appropriating for political reasons their own project, and that the fact that we decided to do it through an Executive Decree instead of a Law was only a machiavellic scheme to present to the public and take credit for the creation of an Ombudsman before their own project was approved.

Signing the Decree was, however, the easiest part. Making it operative and giving it the necessary means for its work was the next and - so far - the most difficult problem to solve.

Present budgetary restrictions make it impossible to create new posts within the Public Administration or to transfer funds between programs. Furthermore, the 1988 budget had been prepared before the creation of the Ombudsman and therefore it was not possible to obtain any resources for that year.

We turned then to the International Community for support and assistance. And I must say that all countries and institutions that we approached gave us moral support and congratulated us on our initiative - but no funds for cooperation were forthcoming.

Some international institutions circulated our project to other developing countries and as a result a project to create an Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents was prepared in Argentina based on our initiative.

So, we had a Decree, many congratulations - but no Ombudsman ready to work !

The government's commitment, however, was clear and real. We felt that there was an urgency for this office under the country's present circumstances and therefore it became a priority. We were finally able to convince financial and economic authorities and -one year almost to the day from the time that the Decree was signed - we were able to obtain an extraordinary budget approved by the National Assembly to start the operation.

But before talking about the operational aspects, allow me to give you a very general picture of the institutional situation in our country.

In Costa Rica there is a diversity of institutions - both public and private - that address the problems and the needs of children and youth. But each one acts on very specific aspects, sometimes duplicating actions and most of the time without any coordination among themselves.

On the other hand, there is a growing concern for the need to overcome old patterns of assistance and to put emphasis on preventive measures at the community level rather than to continue with curative systems.

In this sense, the Children's Ombudsman becomes an important complement to the child care system of the country ; it will be able to act directly, without red tape. But it will not substitute the administrative, judicial or police instances that attend to the problems of children.

We do not conceive the Ombudsman as a watchman for civil rights only, but as an active promotor in political as well as social functions.

It is unfortunate that in the Spanish language we have not yet found the correct translation for the word "Ombudsman". We call him "Defensor". The Defender. But this term does not correctly transmit the many functions of the Ombudsman and, in legal circules, it is sometimes confused with a defender of legal rights only.

The objectives of the Ombudsman for Children, as stated in the Executive Decree that created it has two main aspects : One, to protect children's rights. Two, to promote policies, programmes, projects and research activities that will bring forth a better knowledge of the children's situation as well as their needs.

To fulfill these objectives he is empowered to :

- Receive and investigate complaints and to remit them to the corresponding institution.

- To prevent violations of children's rights through actions and recommendations that he will present to government institutions.

- Act as a mediator in cases in which children are affected.

- Propose reforms to laws and procedures that will improve the defense of children's rights.

- Give ample publicity to the situation and the needs of children at all levels, including the use of mass communication media.

- Promote the general knowledge of children's rights among the general public, but specially among individuals that work directly with children, those responsible for policy making processes and to children themselves.

- Determine prioritary areas to which public and private resources should be directed in order to obtain the maximum benefit for children.

Coming back to the operative aspects and taking into account the actual situation of children's attention, we have determined four areas of work for the office of the Ombudsman during the first year. These areas of work are :

- **Promotion and design of studies and campaigns on specific aspects related to the needs of children.**

In this area we wish to support research projects that are action-oriented and to participate in campaigns that refer to specific needs of the most vulnerable groups of children, such as refugees, street children, sexual abused children, and so forth.

One project wich is already being supported is the creation of a Data Base on Children. This project is being implemented by the National Autonomous University with the technical assistance of the Interamerican Children's Institute of the Organization of American States.

Please note that, at least for the time being, the Ombudsman's office will not carry out these tasks. It will induce and support others to do them. The reason for this is simple : we do not want to create a large infrastructure nor do we have the funds to do it. The Ombudsman should be able to convince others of the importance of children so that they themselves put their own specialized resources at their service.

The second activity programmed is the start of a complete revision of all laws and legal procedures that affect children.

Some of our laws have been into force, without changes, for many decades and urgently need to be updated to take into account new situations not previously contemplated, such as the problems of refugee children and the question of drug addiction.

Thirdly, we wish to promote the knowledge of the rights of the child at all levels of Costa Rican society.

A seminar that we held a few months ago gave us an experience that made us think very seriously about this problem : We met with specialists on the problems of abandoned children and among other things, we asked them wether certain imaginary situations that we had prepared did or didn't constitute violations of children's rights. It was surprising that even these specialists had difficulty determining what are the special rights of children. One can then infer that the general public has even less information in order to come to conclusions about questions that deal with children's rights.

This activity is directly related with the study and ratification of the proposed United Nations Children's Rights Convention. Just before this Christmas, the office of the Ombudsman called the first meeting of a National Commission that will study this project and will promote its ratification by our National Assembly. This Commission is constituted by specialists on children's attention, human rights, international legal aspects and government executives.

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- The last area of immediate work is related with direct complaints and queries that will be received by the Ombudsman.
  We wish to promote direct access of the children to the office, as well as a speedy processing of all requests received. For this particular aspect we wish to be able to draw upon the experience of experts in specific fields of action, such as lawyers, pediatricians, social workers, sociologists and who ever the specific case might require.

This is, in very general terms, what we are doing in Costa Rica, that little country that decided to become the first one in Latin America to have an Ombudsman for Children.

I must confess that I feel somewhat owed to be in front of you relating to you an experience that is not quite yet a significant experience.

I am aware that very little - if any - of what I have said tonight is new to you. Some countries on the Continent have already a decade's experience with their Ombudsman for Children.

Professor Verhellen's initiative to promote a Congress on Ombudswork for Children is, in our opinion, a great leap forward in this aspect and will benefit, in a very direct and special form, those of us that want to enrich ourselves with your experience.

We in Costa Rica are just beginning our long journey into the future of children's rights protection and I confess that I am here tonight to learn from you, to have the benefit of your experience and guidance.

We have apprehensions and we have doubts in relation to Ombudswork for Children. These I want to share with you :

Will there not be a temptation, on the part of the Ombudsman, to try to solve all problems by himself, if the established institutions do not act with the required promptnes ?

What happens when the Ombudsman finds himself in front of an esta-blished burocracy that is only interested in maintaining the status quo ?

How does one obtain children's participation - not adult-induced child participation and how can we give children a voice in matters that are directly of their own concern ?

What should be our position in reference to the rapidly deteriorating traditional family patterns when we face structural changes due to new cultural mores and the incorporation of greated number of women to the labour force ? Are we to promote new structures ? Are we to strengthen traditional values ?

You can see, therefore, that I bring more question than answers. But - surely - we consider, as our President wishes - this first opportunity and honour of being with you as the start of a new relationship where we will share, at all times, the results - poor or good - of our continuing first steps in this new experience of child protection and were we hope to continue benefiting from your counsel and experience.

LECTURE ON THE LATIN AMERICAN

CHILD AND FAMILY NETWORK

Paper presented to the Seminarie en Laboratorium voor Jeugdwelzijn en Volwassenenvorming, University of Gent, January 1989, by Rolando Quiros.

All Latin American nations look back on a common past. With a few minor exceptions, its discovery, conquest and colonization was carried out by the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. From these we inherited a common religion : catholicism, and - except for Brazil, a common language : Spanish.

The wars of independence at the beginning of the 19th Century were fought under the leadership of men who envisioned a Continental Federation of Nations that would join forces and efforts to become a young World Power.

Almost a hundred years ago, yet another effort was made following Simon Bolivar's ideas : the creation of an Organization of American States, and - in more recent times - we have witnessed the creation of sub-regional common markets ; free-trade zones and the most varied number of regional organizations and associations that address an endless number of specific aspects. From philately to satellites.

Yet, few - if any - of these organizations have reached their stated objectives of inter-regional cooperation. The region continues - today - in the eve of the 20th century - to be a region of nationalistic compartments that find it easier to communicate with Europe and with North America than among themselves.

The reason for this are many and varied, and their analysis is perhaps outside of the scope of the matter that I wish to talk about with you about this afternoon. But I think that it is necessary as a useful background, to

mention what I consider the main obstacles to our own integration - taking the word integration in its most ample meaning.

- During the colonial period we were not permitted to communicate and trade among ourselves. All commerce, all communication was done through the mother country. It was not, for example, until the 21st of October of 1821 that we Costa Ricans learned that our independence from Spain had been declared in Guatemala on the 15th of September of that year.
- Because our economic development was oriented to external markets - coffee for Europe, Argentine meat for the United Kingdom, bananas for the United States - our internal transportation system - roads and railroads - were designed and built from our production centers to the ocean ports that would take our products overseas. Our railroads - therefore - do not communicate us with our neighbours. They are links to external world markets.

The same situation has been repeated in more recent developments. We have easy access - via satellites - to data bases in the United States but it is not yet possible for Central American Countries to access with the same facility data bases in countries like Chile, Argentina or Brazil. It is more expensive to travel by air from Costa Rica to Argentina than to travel from Costa Rica to London, Madrid.

The situation in relation to the attention of children in the different countries of the region has not been very different. Those of us who have been working with and for children have always felt a sense of isolation

and the need to share with our own countries our experiences, our thoughts and our needs.

I believe that this situation is not necessarily related to the availability of financial resources. It is felt by individuals working with international organizations - some of which do not lack resources to communicate ; by people within governmental structures and even more by non-governmental organizations and community groups.

It was a personal experience of this kind that prompted some of us to do something concrete about this situation :

- In the 1970s we in Central America started to hear about wonderful experiences implemented in the United States in relation to the incorporation of Early Stimulation techniques to integral child development programs in general.

  Up to that time, Early Stimulation in Central America was a methodology, or rather a technique, applied only in Special Education Centres that worked with disadvantaged children only. The application of early stimulation techniques to "normal" children, therefore, became a subject of studies, programmes and publications.

  Exactly two years after we had started a programme of this type (which we then believed was a sensational discovery)- we learned that in other countries, specially Chile, Argentina and Uruguay - the

use of Early Stimulation was - pardon the expression - "old stuff". And therefore, our sensational discovery amounted, more or less, to the discovery of boiling water.

Had we known about these previous and succesful experiences in our own backyard, we could have saved a long and costly trial process.

How was it possible that even international organizations that were cooperating with us and that knew of these other experiences had never attempted to draw our attention to them ? How was it possible that we have been meeting among ourselves in many Conferences and Congresses without talking to each other about our experiences?

We - and when I say we I refer to three persons that had shared similar experiences and the same sense of isolation started to talk and comment among ourselves about this situation and about what - if anything - could be done to remedy it.

Our first approach was that it was evident that established institutions, either governmental or non-governmental, were too bounded by their own burocracies and their own institutional interests to be able to respond unselfishly to these needs. New linkages, therefore, had to be established at the level of communities and individuals, and they should be free of burocratic procedures.

We also thought that the most appropriate scheme for inter-communication would be an informal network ; but one that would not centralize the information flow but, rather, would facillitate and encourage the direct communication among its focal points.

And so, on the first day of May, 1985, without any funds, without any previous experience in networking - but with a very clear idea of our own experiences and needs in relation to children welfare - these three persons decided to create the Latina America and Caribbean Child and Family Network.

A series of considerations that we drew up at that time explain the reasons, the objectives and the operational schemes of the network at that moment.

The first question that needed an answer was : Why a net- work ? Our answer was :

- Because many of us have shared the same search for new roads towards social development processes based on the individual and on his needs.

- Because, even though there are evident disparities in the stage of development of each of the Latin American countries, we share common cultural, historic and social heritages.

- Because there is a need of a new dimension in international cooperation that will take into account our idiosyncracy and our own experiences.

The objectives of Network were expressed as follows :

- To do away with the sense of isolation in which we have been working.

- To discover and take advantage of our own human and technical resources and experiences.

- To obtain the most efficient use of our resources, specially for the benefit of those that have more needs.

- To induce a process of thinking and common search for our own social development alternatives.

- To give international cooperation a more participative, humane and committed role in the process of development.

The next obvious question was, then, "What is network" ?

We started by saying what the network is not. It is not an institution. It is not a burocratic structure.

The network is a regional mechanism, open to all and in constant evolution. It is a work instrument, a toot at the service of all those that wish to use it.

The Network, then, wishes to : Allow the permanent communication of those that share common interests in the welfare of children and families.

To allow the exchange of information, materials and technical staff so that we can take advantage of each other's work.

To promote the exchange of experiences related with the attention of children that take into account the participation of the community, have significate coverage at reasonable costs, and have proven their usefulness and adaptability. By this we mean that we wanted to draw away from imported experiences that cannot be transplanted because they were designed for very different conditions.

To promote research that will increase our knowledge of children and their needs and to make it available to those that need it to improve their work.

Underlying these objectives, we set forth the principles upon which we believe that all actions in favour of children should be based :

One, The Child is not a small adult. He is a complete and integral human being, in the first stage of his development process.

Two, The Child is not an isolated entity but a member of society and his wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of his immediate family and community.

Three, each human being has the responsibility to contribute, according to his possibilities and capabilities, to the welfare of his own community.

Four, the development process is a matter of people. Their motivation and participation - more than techniques and external resources - is what will bring forth sustained development.

Five, development alternatives are not fixed roads. They must take into account cultural and spiritual identities, the specific needs of different regions, and the requirements at various stages of development.

Perhaps I have indulged too much in these philosophical aspects that are the basis of our network ; but I considered it necessary in order to understand the reasons for the way in which we have acted, which I now will share with you.

If I were forced to say, in very few words, what the network is, I would say that the network is a mechanism to allow those of us working with and for children to know who we are, where we are and what we are doing.

In practical terms, allow me now to explain what the network is doing, its evolution and what we hope to achieve.

Our first decision was that the network would not - ever - implement projects. This decision was based on our own good and bad experiences in international and government organizations. Nobody should see the network as competition but, rather, as a facillitator that can help them carry out their own actions, not supplant them.

From three persons at the start, we grew to 500 participants by the end of 1986 ; to 1000 at the end of 1987 and to 1.500 last month. Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica for obvious reasons, are the countries with more participants. Together, they amount for more than 40 % of the total.

A participant is any person or institution that expresses his desire to participate. There is no financial fee ; only the moral obligation to share with the rest of the participants.

We created what we call the Basic Nucleus, that was to be responsible for its operation and obtaining financial resources. It was constituted, at the beginning, by the three funders. But from the beginning we agreed upon strict rules that would help us not to fall in the management and administrative vices we had experienced in other institutions. Among these rules were : that none of the members should stay in the Basic Nucleus for more than 5 years. One member would act as Coordinator, changed every two years. And that the outgoing Coordinator

would stay only one more year. We would not have our own office but share premises of another participating institution.

The first members were self-appointed, but we would look for mechanisms that would give all participants a voice in the election of future members.

The first activity of the network was to publish, in Spanish, a quarterly bulletin which we distribute, free of charge. From the first editions of 1500 copies we have grown to a level of 5000 copies in the latest editions. 14 bulletins have so far been published.

In each country we identified a person involved in child attention that would act as animator of the network. His work is on a voluntary basis. His duties are to distribute the bulletin, create a local nucleus, supply information for publication and identify experiences that are innovative. We now have national coordinators in 17 of the 31 countries of the region. Not all of them have responded with the same effort and enthusiasm. We are not requesting the local nucleus to assume the responsibility for naming the coordinator at the national level.

We soon felt the need of having legal status in order to be able to be considered by international organisations as subjects for donations and grants. We created an international non-governmental association based in Switzerland. It was done in Switzerland because we wanted to be close to the organizations that had expressed interest in cooperating with us and because of the fact that the laws of our own countries require - in

almost all cases - that a majority of its members be citizens of the country. This decision was probably wrong. It has been taken by some as an unwillingness on our part to assume concrete responsibilities, and it has not been an advantage in fund raising.

Besides the bulletin, we established a section called Attention of Participants which endeavoured to give particular attention and follow-up to any request received from a participant as a result of the articles published in the bulletin or the work of the local coordinator. This section tries to obtain more detailed information about the need and resources of each participant so that they can be matched to the needs and resources of other participants working in similar fields of child care. It has also prepared a Directory of Participants so that they can take the innitiative in corresponding among themselves.

Another section is the Exchange of Experiences. As our work expanded in the countries, we were able to identify projects that we considered worthy of being studied and applied in other countries. A programme of School for Parents in Ecuador, a Children's Organization in Peru, a Centre for Adolescent Mothers in Honduras, a Training Programme for Child Care Personnel in Costa Rica, are some examples of such projects.

These experiences are published in the bulletin, if this creates further interest in some participants we obtain more technical information for them. If we identify persons that would benefit from learning more, directly, about the experience, we try to serve as

facillitators to obtain the funds and arrange details for a working visit. We have been able to carry out exchanges that involve Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Yet another area of concern has been the evident need to be able to have access to reliable and updated information about children. It is my personal opinion and experience that most of the programmes that we implement in Latin America fail because - from the very beginning - they were based on false premises due to the use of outdated or unreliable information. The amount of resources wasted in such projects, or in duplicating activities because of lack of information, must be very significant and it becomes an even more serious concern in times of economic crisis, like the one we now have in Latin America.

The network, therefore, established what we call a Permanent Information Workshop to promote - not to implement - the creation of data bases on children in each country.

Once these are created, and if they start with the same guidelines and thesaurus, we would be able to bring them together into a regional system available to all.

In 1987 we sponsored a meeting of institutions that had been working along these lines. 12 institutions participated and as a result the Interamerican Children's Institute has been giving technical advice and establishing national data bases in several countries.

Allow me now to mention, very suscintly, some of the main problems that we have encountered in the two and a half years of the network's operations.

- We face difficulties in integrating important areas of the region to the network because of language difficulties. Brazil is Portugese speaking and most of the Caribbean area is English or French speaking. So far, we have not had the necessary funds to provide translations of the bulletin.

- While we have grown from 3 to 1.500 we are still but a small tip of an iceberg that represents government, non-governmental and community organizations, students and housewives that deal with children and are interested in their problems.

- We have met serious communication problems. Mail that never arrives and very expensive long distance telephone fees and travel fares. Plus the fact that there seems to be no tradition of letter-writing in Latin America.

- Fully half of our time and efforts have been devoted to the preparation and negotiation of external financial resources for the network's operation. We live on a month - to month or rather - on a bulletin - to -bullletin budget.

- Our initial decision to implement a strict system of rotation in the coordinating and management post is being menaced by some members that wish to stay longer than we had agreed. This could affect the principles upon which the network is based and could convert it into just another organization like so many that live more for themselves than for their objectives.

- And finally - and perhaps more important - we have found that, although there is a general interest in children's matters, the specific aspects in which each one of us works, requires specific specialized information and attention.

Those that work in the defense of children's rights, for example, are hardly interested in operational problems of day care centers. A specialized bulletin related to Children Affected by Armed Violence and Children's Rights has just been started as an independent branch of the network.

With this, I come to the last question we wished to answer : Where is the network going in the near future ?

In mid 1988 we met with all the national coordinators and asked them to start assuming the responsibilities of the Basic Nucleus. The responsibility of the bulletin was transfered from Costa Rica to Peru. The region was divided into working areas so that persons from these same

areas would now help in the neighbouring countries, saving on travel funds and extended trips.

The quest for financial support was given to Mexico. With these actions the Basic Nucleus that started the network has disappeared.

Because we think it is quite relevant, I would like to mention again the latest action of the network : the creation of a specialized and completely independent project with the same objectives and philosophy but addressed exclusively to those that work with children affected by armed violence and in the defence of human rights. Should any of you have particular interest in this matter I will be glad to talk further or to correspond with you in the near future.

Dear friends, dear Dr. Verhellen : I cannot express in words what the honour of being with you and having had the opportunity to share some of our experiences, means to us.

Perhaps our objectives have been naive; perhaps the results are not as spectacular as was expected. But it has been an experience based on our own experience, addressed to our own needs, and managed by us.

Your guidance and support are most welcomed.

Thank you.

BIJLAGE

Addresses in Oslo, Norway,
December 10th and 11th, 1987,
on occasion of receive the
Nobel Prize of Peace 1987

PEACE HAS NO FINISHING LINE

Weapons do not fire on their own. Those who have lost hope fire them. Those who are controlled by dogmas fire them. We must fight for peace undismayed, and fearlessly accept these challenges from those without hope an from the threats of fanatics.

Nobody knows better than the honourable members of this Committee, that this prize is a sign to let the world know that you want to foster the Central American peace iniciative. With your decision you are enhancing the possibilities of success. You are declaring how well you know the search for peace can never end.

Oscar Arias Sánchez

PEACE HAS NO FINISHING LINE

When you decided to honour me with this prize, you decided to honour a country of peace, you decided to honour Costa Rica. When in this year, 1987, you carried out the will of Alfred E. Nobel to encourage peace efforts in the world, you decided to encourage the efforts to secure peace in Central America. I am grateful for the recognition of our search for peace. We are all grateful in Central America.

Nobody knows better than the honourable members of this Committee, that this prize is a sign to let the world know that you want to foster the Central American peace initiative. With your decision you are enhancing the possibilities of success. You are declaring how well you know the search for peace can never end, and how it is a permanent cause, always in need of true support from real friends, from people with courage to promote change in favour of peace, even against all odds.

Peace is not a matter of prizes or trophies. It is not the product of a victory or command. It has no finishing line, no final deadline, no fixed definition of achievement.

Peace is a never-ending process, the work of many decision by many people in many countries. It is an attitude, a way of life, a way of solving problems and resolving conflicts. It cannot be forced on the smallest nation or enforced by the largest. It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests. It requires us to work and live together.

Peace is not only a matter of noble words and Nobel lectures. We have ample words, glorious words, inscribed in the charters of the United Nations, the World Court, the Organization of American States and a network of international treaties and laws. We need deeds that will respect those words, honour those commitments, abide by those laws. We need to strengthen our institutions of peace like the United Nations, making certain they are fully used by the weak as well as the strong.

I pay no attention to those doubters and detractors unwilling to believe that a lasting peace can be genuinely embraced by who march under a different ideological banner from those who are more accustomed to cannons of war than to councils of peace.

We seek in Central America not peace alone, not peace to be followed some day by political progress, but peace and democracy, together, indivisible, an end to the shedding of human blood, which is inseparable from an end to the suppression of human rights. We do not judge, much less condemn, any other nation's political or ideological system, freely chosen and never exported. We cannot require sovereign states to conform to patterns of government not of their own choosing. But we can and do insist that every government respect those universal rights of man that have meaning beyond national boundaries and ideological labels. We believe that justice and peace can only thrive, never apart. A nation that mistreats its own citizens, is more likely to mistreat its neighbours.

To receive this Nobel Prize on the 10th of December is for me a marvellous coincidence. My son Oscar Felipe, here present, is eight years old today. I say to him, and through him to all the children of my country, that we shall never resort to violence, we shall never support military solutions to the problems of Central America. It is for the new generation that we must understand more than ever that peace can only be achieved through its own instruments: dialogue and understanding; tolerance and forgiveness; freedom and democracy.

I know well you share what we say to all members of the international community, and particularly to those both in the East and the West with far greater power and resources than my small nation could ever hope to possess. I say to them, with the utmost urgency: let Central Americans decide the future of Central America. Leave the interpretation and implementation of our peace plan to us. Support the efforts for peace instead of the forces of war in our region. Send our people ploughshares instead of swords, pruning hooks instead of spears. If they, for their own purposes, cannot refrain form amassing the weapons of war, then, in the name of God, at least they should leave us in peace.

I say here to His Royal Highness and to the honourable members of the Nobel Peace Committee, to the wonderful people of Norway, that I accept this prize because I know how passionately you share our quest for peace, our eagerness for success. If, in the years to come, peace prevails, and violence and war are thus avoided; a large part of that peace will be due to the faith of the people of Norway and will be theirs forever.

Address of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, in Oslo University, on occasion of receive the Nobel Prize of Peace 1987, December 10th, 1987.

ONLY PEACE CAN WRITE THE NEW HISTORY

Desiring peace

Peace consists, very largely, in the fact of desiring it with all one's soul. The inhabitants of my small country Costa Rica have realized those words by Erasmus. Mine is an unarmed people, whose children have never seen a fighter or a tank or a warship. One of my guests at this award, here with us today, is Jose Figueres Ferrer, the man with the vision to abolish my country's armed forces in 1948, and thus set our history on a new course.

I am a Latin American

I am not receiving this prize as Oscar Arias, any more than I am receiving it as the President of my country. While I have not the arrogance to presume to represent anyone, neither do I fear the humility which identifies me with everyone, and with their great causes.

I receive it as one of the 400 million Latin Americans who, in the return to liberty, in the exercise of democracy, are seeking the way to overcome so much misery and so much injustice. I come from that Latin America whose face is deeply marked with pain, the record of the exile, torture, imprisonment and death of many of its men and its women. I come from that Latin American region where totalitarian regimes still exist which put the whole of humanity to shame.

America's scars

The scars by which America is marked are deep. At this very time, America is seeking to return to freedom, and it is only as it approaches democracy that it can see the dreadful trail of torture, banishment and death left by dictators. The problems America has to overcome are enormous. An inheritance from an unjust past has been aggravated by the fatal deeds of tyrants to produce foreign debts, social insensitivity, economic upheavals, corruption and the many other evils of our societies. The evils are manifest, naked to the view of anyone who cares to see them.

Seeing the size of the challenge, no wonder many are prey to discouragement; or that apocalyptic prophets abound, announcing the failures of the fight against poverty, proclaiming the immediate fall of the democracies, forecasting the futility of peace-making efforts.

I do not share this defeatism. I cannot accept that to be realistic means to tolerate misery, violence and hate. I do not believe that the hungry man should be treated as subversive for expressing his suffering. I shall never accept that the law can be used to justify tragedy, to keep things as they are, to make us abandon our ideas of a different world. Law is the path to liberty, and must as such open the way to progress for everyone.

Liberty performs miracles

Liberty performs miracles. To free men, everything is possible. A free and democratic America can meet the challenges confronting it. When I assumed the Presidency of Costa Rica, I called for an alliance for freedom and democracy in the Americas. I said then, and I repeat today, that we should not be the allies, either politically or economically, of governments which oppress their peoples. Latin America has never known a single war between two democracies. That is sufficient reason for every man of good faith, every well-intentioned nation, to support efforts to put an end to tyranny.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

America cannot wait

America's freedom, the freedom of the whole of America, cannot wait. I come from a world with huge problems, which we shall overcome in freedom. I come from a world in a hurry, because hunger cannot wait. When hope is forgotten, violence does not delay. Dogmatism is too impatient for dialogue. I come from a world where, if we are to make sure that there will be no turning back from our progress towards liberty, if we are to frustrate every oppressive intent, we have no time to lose. I come from a world which cannot wait for the guerilla and the soldier to hold their fire: young people are dying, brothers are dying, and tomorrow who can tell why. I come from a world which cannot wait to open prison gates not, as before, for free men to go in, but for those imprisoned to come out.

America's liberty and democracy have no time to lose, and we need the whole world's understanding to win freedom from dictators, to win freedom from misery.

I come from Central America

I accept this prize as one of 27 million Central Americans. Behind the democratic awakening in Central America lies over a century of merciless dictatorships and general injustice and poverty. The choice before my little America is whether to suffer another century of violence, or to achieve peace by overcoming the fear of liberty. Only peace can write the new history.

We in Central America will not lose faith. We shall set history right. How sad that they would have us believe that peace is a dream, justice utopian, shared well-being impossible! How sad that there should be people in the world who cannot understand that in the former plantations of Central America, nations are asserting themselves and striving, with every right, for better destinies for their peoples! How sad that some cannot see that Central America does not want to prolong its past, but to create a new future, with hope for the young and dignity for the old!

Realising dreams

The Central American isthmus is a region of great contrasts, but also of heartening unison. Millions of men and women share dreams of freedom and progress. In some countries, the dreams are dispelled by systematic violations of human rights; they are shattered by fratricidal struggles in town and country, and come up against the realities of poverty so extreme it stops the heart. Poets who are the pride of mankind know that millions upon millions cannot read them in their own countries, because so many of the men and women there are illiterate. There are on this narrow strip of land painters and sculptors whom we shall admire for ever, but also dictators whom we have no wish to remember because they offend the most cherished human values.

Central America cannot go on dreaming, nor does it want to. History demands that dreams turn into realities. Now there is no time to lose. Today we can take our destiny in our own hands. In this region, home alike to the oldest and strongest democracy in Latin America–that of Costa Rica–and to a history of the most merciless and cruel dictatorships, democratic awakening requires special loyalty to freedom.

Seeing that the past dictatorships were only capable of creating misery and crippling hope, how absurd to pretend to cure the evils of one extreme dictatorship by means of its opposite! No one in Central America has the right to fear freedom, no one is entitled to preach absolute truths. The evils of one dogma are the evils of any dogma. They are all the enemies of human creativity. As Pascal said: "We know a great deal to make us scheptical. We know very little to make us dogmatic."

History can only move towards liberty. History can only have justice at its heart. To march in the opposite direction to history is to be on the road to shame, poverty and oppression. Without freedom, there is no revolution. All oppression runs counter to man's spirit.

Freedom: a shared longing

Central America is at an agonizing crossroads: faced with terrible poverty, some call, from the mountains or from governments, for dictatorships with other ideologies, ignoring the cries for freedom of many generations. To the serious problems of general misery, as we know them in their North-South context, is added the conflict between East and West. Where poverty meets conflicting ideologies and the fear of liberty, one can see a cross of ill omen taking shape in Central America.

Let us make no mistake. The only answer for Central America, the answer to its poverty as well as to its political challenges, is freedom from misery and freedom from fear. Anyone who proposes to solve the ills of centuries in the name of a dogma will only help to make the problems of the past grow bigger in the future.

There is a shared desire in the spirit of man which has for centuries sought liberty in Central America. No one must betray this spiritual union. To do so would be to condemn our little America to another hundred years of horrifying oppression, of meaningless death, of fighting for freedom.

I am from Costa Rica

I am receiving this prize as one of 2.7 million Costa Ricans. My people draw their sacred liberty from the two oceans which bound us to the east and west. To the south and to the north, Costa Rica has almost always been bounded by dictators and dictatorships. We are an unarmed people, and we are fighting to remain free from hunger. To America we are a symbol of peace, and we hope to be a symbol of development. We intend to show that peace is both the first requirement and the fruit of progress.

Country of teachers

My country is a country of teachers. It is therefore a country of peace. We discuss our successes and failures in complete freedom. Because our country is a nation of teachers, we closed the army camps, and our children go about with books under their arms, not with rifles on their shoulders. We believe in dialogue, in agreement, in reaching a consensus. We reject violence. Because my country is a country of teachers, we believe in convincing our opponents, not defeating them. We prefer raising the fallen to crushing them, because we believe that no one possesses the absolute truth. Because mine is a country of teachers, we seek an economy in which men cooperate in a spirit of solidarity, not an economy in which they compete to their own extinction.

Education in my country has been compulsory and free for 118 years. Health care now extends to every citizen, and housing for the people is a basic aim of my Government.

A new economy

Just as we take pride in many of our achievements, we make no secret of our worries and problems. In hard times, we must be capable of establishing a new economy and restoring growth. We have said that we do not want an economy which is insensitive to domestic needs or to the demands of the most humble. We have said that we will not, merely for the sake of economic growth, give up our hope of creating a more egalitarian society. Our country has the lowest rate of unemployment in the Western Hemisphere. We hope to be the first Latin American country to get rid of slums. We are convinced that a country free from slums will be a country free from hatred, where poor people, too, can enjoy the privilege of working for progress in freedom.

Stronger than a thousand armies

In these years of bitterness in Central America, many people in my country are afraid that, driven by minds diseased and blinded by fanaticism, the violence in the region may spread to Costa Rica. Some have given way to the fear that we would have to establish an army to keep violence away from our borders. What senseless weakness! Such ideas are worth less than the thirty pieces of silver handed to Judas. Costa Rica's strength, the force which makes it invincible by violence, which makes it stronger than a thousand armies, is the power of liberty, of its principles, of the great ideals of our civilization. When one honestly lives up to one's ideas, when one is not afraid of liberty, one is invulnerable to totalitarian blows.

We know, in Costa Rica, that only freedom allows political projects to be realized embracing a country's entire population. Only freedom allows people to be reconciled in tolerance. The painful paths trodden aimlessly around the world by wandering Cubans, Nicaraguans, Paraguayans, Chileans, and so many others who cannot return to their own countries, testify most cruelly to the rule of dogma. Liberty bears no labels, democracy no colours. One can tell them, when one meets them, as the real experience of a people.

A peace plan

Faced with the nearness of Central America's violence, Costa Rica with all its history, and especially with its youthful idealism, obliged me to take to the region's battlefield the peace of my people, the faith in dialogue, the need for tolerance. As the people's servant, I proposed a peace plan for Central America. The plan was also founded on Simon Bolivar's cry for freedom, manifested in the tenacious and brave work of the Contadora Group and the Support Group.

I am one of five Presidents

I receive this award as one of the five Presidents who have pledged to the world the will of their peoples to exchange a history of oppression for a future of freedom; a history of hunger for a destiny of progress; the cry of mothers and the violent death of youths for a hope, a path of peace which we wish to take together.

Hope is the strongest driving force for a people. Hope which brings about change, which produces new realities, is what opens man's road to freedom. Once hope has taken hold, courage must unite with wisdom. That is the only way of avoiding violence, the only way of maintaining the calm one needs to respond peacefully to offences.

However noble a crusade, some people will desire and promote its failure. Some few appear to accept war as the normal course of events, as the solution to problems. How ironic that powerful forces are angered by interruptions in the course of war, by efforts to eliminate the sources of hatred! How ironic that any intention to stop war in its course triggers rages and attacks, as if we were disturbing the sleep of the just or halting a necessary measure, and not a heart-rending evil! How ironic for peace-making efforts to discover that hatred is stronger for many than love; that the longing to achieve power through military victories makes so many men lose their reason, forget all shame, and betray history.

Let weapons fall silent

Five Presidents in Central America have signed an accord to seek a firm and lasting peace. We want arms to fall silent and men to speak. Our sons are being killed by conventional weapons. Our youths are being killed by conventional weapons.

Fear of nuclear war, the horrors of what we have heard about the nuclear end of the world, seem to have made us uncaring about conventional war. Memories of Hiroshima are stronger than memories of Viet Nam! How welcome it would be if conventional weapons were treated with the same awe as the atom bomb! How welcome it would be if the killing of many little by little, every day, were considered just as outrageous as the killing of many all at once! Do we really live in such an irrational world that we would be more reluctant to use conventional weapons if every country had the bomb, and the fate of the world depended on a single madman? Would that make universal peace more secure? Have we any right to forget the 78 million human beings killed in the wars of this twentieth century?

The world today is divided between those who live in fear of being destroyed in nuclear war, and those who are dying day by day in wars fought with conventional weapons. This terror of the final war is so great that it has spread the most frightening insensibility towards the arms race and the use of non-nuclear weapons. We need most urgently– our intelligence requires us, our pity enjoins us–to struggle with equal intensity to ensure that neither Hiroshima nor Viet Nam is repeated.

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Weapons do not fire on their own. Those who have lost hope fire them. Those who are controlled by dogmas fire them. We must fight for peace undismayed, and fearlessly accept these challenges from those without hope and from the threats of fanatics.

I say to the poet

The peace plan which we five Presidents signed accepts all the challenges. The path to peace is difficult, very difficult. We in Central America need everyone's help to achieve peace.

It is easier to predict the defeat of peace in Central America than its victory. That is how it was when man wanted to fly, and when he wanted to conquer space. That is how it was in the hard days of the two world wars which our century has known. That is how it was and still is as man confronts the most dreadful diseases and the task of eliminating poverty and hunger from the world.

History was not written by men who predicted failure, who gave up their dreams, who abandoned their principles, who allowed their laziness to put their intelligence to sleep. If certain men at times were alone in seeking victory, they always had at their side the watchful spirit of their peoples, the faith and destiny of many generations.

Perhaps it was in difficult times for Central America, like those we are living through today, perhaps it was in premonition of the present crossroads, that Rubén Darío, our America's greatest poet, wrote these lines, convinced that history would take its course:

Pray, generous, pious and proud;
pray, chaste, pure, heavenly and brave;
intercede for us, entreat for us,
for already we are almost without sap or shoot,
without soul, without life, without light, without Quixote,
without feet and without wings, without Sancho and without God.

I assure the immortal poet that we shall not cease to dream, we shall not fear wisdom, we shall not flee from freedom. To the eternal poet I say that in Central America we shall not forget Quixote, we shall not renounce life, we shall not turn our backs on the spirit, and we shall never lose our faith in God.

I am one of those five men who signed an accord, a commitment which consists, very largely, in the fact of desiring peace with all one's soul.

KIDS

KIND-IN-DE-SAMENLEVING
ONDERZOEKS- EN DOCUMENTATIECENTRUM KINDERRECHTEN

Bij het begin van de 20ste eeuw - de eeuw van het kind - was in Europa 1 persoon op 3 een kind. Nu is dit nog 1 persoon op 5. Onze West-Europese samenlevingen worden geconfronteerd met een groeiende onverenigbaarheid tussen het kind (als sociale categorie) en de volwassene (als sociale categorie). De tegenstellingen tussen kinderen en volwassenen worden sterk benadrukt. Kinderen worden zodoende momenteel vaak ervaren als duur, storend, hinderlijk voor de carrière of de zelfontplooiing van de ouders, enz. Deze maatschappelijke evolutie wordt ondersteund door de dominante wetenschappelijke inzichten betreffende kinderen. Kind zijn betekent in een dergelijke context afgesloten zijn van de wereld van de volwassenen.

In de actuele maatschappelijke status van kinderen wordt eerder hun anderszijn dan hun zijn benadrukt. Hierdoor ontkennen we het feit, dat kinderen recht hebben op respect voor hun actueel zijn. Wanneer we het hebben over het belang van socialisatie en opvoeding, over de noodzaak kinderen op te leiden tot participatie in de moderne samenleving, drukken we meteen uit

dat kinderen - als kinderen - nog niet behoren tot deze moderne samenleving (van volwassenen) Hun status is een status van "nog-niet-zijn". Hoewel vaak beweerd wordt dat de kindertijd de belangrijkste levensfase is, bedoelt men daarmee te zeggen : "gezien in het licht van het uiteindelijk doel : volwassenwording".

Dit overtrokken ego-centrisme van de volwassene kan men terecht als adulto-centrisme aanduiden.

Net zoals de andere uitingsvormen van het overdreven ego-centrisme van de Westerse mens (antropocentrisme, etnocentrisme) leidt het tot evidente negatieve effecten. Eén van de meest belangrijke gevolgen van dit adultocentrisme is dat kinderen worden beroofd van hun eigenheid. Kinderen worden door de samenleving letterlijk weggecijferd.

Van individuele kinderen, die in de verdrukking dreigen te geraken, moeten we dus dringend onze aandacht verleggen naar het kind, als sociale categorie, dat dreigt te worden verdrukt.

Er is daarom behoefte aan een nieuwe benadering, waarbij kinderen bestudeerd worden in termen van wat ze wel zijn en wel doen. De kindertijd moet erkend worden als een volwaardig aspect van de samenleving, en we moeten afstappen van de eenzijdige benadering van kinderen als individuen, die moeten worden ingepast in de samenleving. Er komt het kind dus een gelijkwaardige behandeling toe.

Deze opvattingen zijn niet nieuw, zij het weinig dominant, en kunnen worden teruggevonden in alle sectoren van de samenleving en in alle wetenschappelijke disciplines. Via het benoemen van dit ideeëngoed onder de naam kinderrechtenbeweging is het bewustzijn en de maatschappelijke betekenis ervan de laatste tijd aanzienlijk toegenomen.

Het centrum Kind-In-De-Samenleving wil onder de benaming Onderzoeks- en Documentatiecentrum Kinderrechten bijdragen tot een brede maatschappelijke verspreiding van dit gedachtengoed en tot een betere wetenschappelijke fundering ervan via het opzetten en stimuleren van multidisciplinair onderzoek.

Het Onderzoeks- en Documentatiecentrum Kinderrechten stelt zich tot taak onderzoek te bevorderen, dat kinderen beschouwt als eenheid van onderzoek, en zodoende complementair kan zijn aan het bestaande onderzoek in de diverse wetenschappelijke disciplines. Het stelt zich niet enkel tot doel zelf onderzoek te verrichten op deze diverse terreinen, maar ook andere onderzoekers te ondersteunen en te adviseren.

Tevens wil het centrum actief bijdragen tot een ruime maatschappelijke verspreiding van de resultaten en de inzichten van dit onderzoek via de uitbouw van een documentatiecentrum, via info- en adviesverlening, via consulting en projectbegeleiding.

Onderwijs is een belangrijk medium in functie van doorstroming en verspreiding van wetenschappelijke inzichten. Het Onderzoeks- en Documentatiecentrum Kinderrechten wil op dit vlak een actieve bijdrage leveren opdat nieuwe wetenschappelijke kennis ook daadwerkelijk aan bod zou komen in de gedoceerde cursussen, en opdat studenten in het kader van hun opleiding zouden kunnen participeren aan de activiteiten van het centrum.

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